



## Complete Summary

---

### TITLE

Substance use disorder: percent of patients entering a designated substance abuse treatment who maintain continuous treatment involvement for at least 90 days (mental health - substance use disorder cohort).

### SOURCE(S)

Office of Quality and Performance (10Q). FY 2005 VHA executive career field network director performance measurement system and JCAHO hospital core measures. Technical manual. Washington (DC): Veterans Health Administration (VHA); 2005 Mar 9. 244 p.

## Measure Domain

### PRIMARY MEASURE DOMAIN

Process

The validity of measures depends on how they are built. By examining the key building blocks of a measure, you can assess its validity for your purpose. For more information, visit the [Measure Validity](#) page.

### SECONDARY MEASURE DOMAIN

Does not apply to this measure

## Brief Abstract

### DESCRIPTION

This measure assesses the percent of patients entering a designated substance abuse treatment who maintain continuous treatment involvement for at least 90 days.

### RATIONALE

Research has shown unequivocally that good addiction treatment outcomes are contingent on adequate lengths of treatment. There is no predetermined length of addiction treatment that assures success, but duration of treatment is the factor most consistently associated with successful addiction treatment outcome. Many patients drop out during the initial 90 days of treatment with limited clinical benefit and high rates of relapse. While two contacts per month for three months

would rarely be sufficient, most patients require ongoing treatment for at least this duration to establish early remission.

The initial intensity of treatment should be considered primarily as a means to promote treatment retention, e.g., severely dependent patients typically may require multiple treatment contacts per week in order to stabilize early remission. However, for many patients following initial stabilization, it may be appropriate to provide a lower intensity of addiction-focused treatment extending over a longer duration with superior remission rates for those who remain engaged in treatment for 6-12 months. Many individuals continue to benefit from treatment (e.g., methadone maintenance) over a period of years.

Consistent with the Veterans Health Administration/Department of Defense (VHA/DoD) Guideline for Treatment of Substance Use Disorders, this performance measure is intended to emphasize the importance of early treatment retention as an essential condition of quality care for addiction. Treatment duration beyond 3 months presents important opportunities to individualize treatment plans consistent with treatment response over time by adjusting the intensity of psychosocial interventions (e.g., frequency of group sessions), pharmacotherapy (e.g., dose amount and monitoring frequency), community recovery support (e.g., promoting Twelve-Step program involvement), and management of comorbid conditions.

#### PRIMARY CLINICAL COMPONENT

Substance use treatment; continuity of care

#### DENOMINATOR DESCRIPTION

Eligible patients from the Mental Health - Substance Use Disorder cohort beginning specialty treatment for substance use disorder (see the related "Denominator Inclusions/Exclusions" field in the Complete Summary)

#### NUMERATOR DESCRIPTION

Eligible patients from the denominator who maintain continuous treatment involvement for at least 90 days (see the related "Numerator Inclusions/Exclusions" field in the Complete Summary)

### Evidence Supporting the Measure

#### EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE CRITERION OF QUALITY

- A clinical practice guideline or other peer-reviewed synthesis of the clinical evidence

#### NATIONAL GUIDELINE CLEARINGHOUSE LINK

- [VHA/DoD clinical practice guideline for the management of substance use disorders.](#)

## Evidence Supporting Need for the Measure

### NEED FOR THE MEASURE

Use of this measure to improve performance  
Variation in quality for the performance measured

### EVIDENCE SUPPORTING NEED FOR THE MEASURE

Office of Quality and Performance (10Q). FY 2005 VHA executive career field network director performance measurement system and JCAHO hospital core measures. Technical manual. Washington (DC): Veterans Health Administration (VHA); 2005 Mar 9. 244 p.

## State of Use of the Measure

### STATE OF USE

Current routine use

### CURRENT USE

External oversight/Veterans Health Administration  
Internal quality improvement

## Application of Measure in its Current Use

### CARE SETTING

Behavioral Health Care  
Rehabilitation Centers  
Substance Use Treatment Programs/Centers

### PROFESSIONALS RESPONSIBLE FOR HEALTH CARE

Advanced Practice Nurses  
Physician Assistants  
Physicians

### LOWEST LEVEL OF HEALTH CARE DELIVERY ADDRESSED

Single Health Care Delivery Organizations

### TARGET POPULATION AGE

Unspecified

### TARGET POPULATION GENDER

Either male or female

## STRATIFICATION BY VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Unspecified

### Characteristics of the Primary Clinical Component

## INCIDENCE/PREVALENCE

Unspecified

## ASSOCIATION WITH VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Unspecified

## BURDEN OF ILLNESS

Unspecified

## UTILIZATION

Unspecified

## COSTS

Unspecified

### Institute of Medicine National Healthcare Quality Report Categories

## IOM CARE NEED

Living with Illness

## IOM DOMAIN

Effectiveness

### Data Collection for the Measure

## CASE FINDING

Users of care only

## DESCRIPTION OF CASE FINDING

Eligible patients from the Mental Health - Substance Use Disorder cohort\*

\*Refer to the original measure documentation for patient cohort description.

## DENOMINATOR SAMPLING FRAME

Patients associated with provider

## DENOMINATOR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS

### Inclusions

Eligible patients from the Mental Health - Substance Use Disorder Cohort beginning specialty treatment for substance use disorder\*

\*Refer to the original measure documentation for patient cohort description and eligibility criteria.

### Exclusions

- Patients discharged dead or deceased during the 90-day retention period (see the "Numerator Inclusions/Exclusions" field).
- Non-veterans are excluded from this measure.

## DENOMINATOR (INDEX) EVENT

Clinical Condition

Therapeutic Intervention

## DENOMINATOR TIME WINDOW

Time window precedes index event

## NUMERATOR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS

### Inclusions

Eligible patients from the denominator who maintain continuous treatment involvement for at least 90 days\*

\*Retention:

- Maintain continuous treatment involvement for at least 90 days defined as: At least 2 visits every 30 days for a total of 90 days in any of the specified outpatient specialty substance abuse (SA) clinics. The retention period begins the day after the date of the 3rd visit that qualifies outpatients for a new episode of care. The 3rd qualifying visit does NOT count as the first retention visit. If the patient has an inpatient substance abuse rehab or residential care episode for substance abuse with a length of stay (LOS) greater than 24 hours but less than 13 days, it will count as maintaining treatment in lieu of a single outpatient visit. If the inpatient or residential episode is at least 14 days, it will serve in lieu of 2 outpatient visits.
- Qualifying date: Date of inpatient discharge if it involves a new episode of care or 3rd visit in 30 days that 'qualifies' the patient to be in the measure

Refer to the original measure documentation for additional details.

## Exclusions

- Opioid substitution visits (Clinic code 523) are not included in this measure.
- Tobacco is not included in this measure.

## NUMERATOR TIME WINDOW

Fixed time period

## DATA SOURCE

Administrative and medical records data

## LEVEL OF DETERMINATION OF QUALITY

Individual Case

## PRE-EXISTING INSTRUMENT USED

Unspecified

## Computation of the Measure

## SCORING

Rate

## INTERPRETATION OF SCORE

Better quality is associated with a higher score

## ALLOWANCE FOR PATIENT FACTORS

Unspecified

## STANDARD OF COMPARISON

Internal time comparison  
Prescriptive standard

## PRESCRIPTIVE STANDARD

Fiscal year (FY) 2005 targets for continuity of care (Mental Health - Substance Use Disorder cohort):

- Facility Floor: 12%
- Meets Target: 36%
- Exceeds Target: 40%

## EVIDENCE FOR PRESCRIPTIVE STANDARD

Office of Quality and Performance (10Q). FY 2005 VHA executive career field network director performance measurement system and JCAHO hospital core measures. Technical manual. Washington (DC): Veterans Health Administration (VHA); 2005 Mar 9. 244 p.

### Evaluation of Measure Properties

## EXTENT OF MEASURE TESTING

Unspecified

### Identifying Information

## ORIGINAL TITLE

Substance use disorder - continuity of care.

## MEASURE COLLECTION

[Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2005: Veterans Health Administration \(VHA\) Performance Measurement System](#)

## MEASURE SET NAME

[Mental Health](#)

## MEASURE SUBSET NAME

[Substance Use Disorder](#)

## DEVELOPER

Veterans Health Administration

## ADAPTATION

Measure was not adapted from another source.

## RELEASE DATE

2002 Nov

## REVISION DATE

2005 Mar

## MEASURE STATUS

Please note: This measure has been updated. The National Quality Measures Clearinghouse is working to update this summary.

#### SOURCE(S)

Office of Quality and Performance (10Q). FY 2005 VHA executive career field network director performance measurement system and JCAHO hospital core measures. Technical manual. Washington (DC): Veterans Health Administration (VHA); 2005 Mar 9. 244 p.

#### MEASURE AVAILABILITY

The individual measure, "Substance Use Disorder - Continuity of Care," is published in "FY 2005 VHA Performance Measurement System: Technical Manual."

For more information contact:

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of Quality and Performance (10Q)  
ATTN: Bonny Collins, E-mail: [bonny.collins@va.gov](mailto:bonny.collins@va.gov) or  
Lynnette Nilan, E-mail: [lynnette.nilan@va.gov](mailto:lynnette.nilan@va.gov)

#### NQMC STATUS

This NQMC summary was completed by ECRI on November 9, 2004. The information was verified by the measure developer on December 10, 2004.

#### COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

No copyright restrictions apply.

© 2006 National Quality Measures Clearinghouse

Date Modified: 8/14/2006

**FIRSTGOV**

